STRANGE

NEWES,

OUT OF

Hartford-shire,

AND

KENT.

witchcraft
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M93
1679a

1. An Account of a Mowing-Devil: being a True Relation of a Farmer, who bargaining with a poor Mower, about the Cutting down Three half Acres of Oats; upon the Mower's aſking too much, the Farmer ſwore, *That the Devil ſhould mow it, rather than he:* And ſo it fell out, that that very Night, the Crop of *Oats* ſhew'd as if it had been all of a Flame; but next Morning appear'd ſo neatly mow'd by the Devil, or ſome Infernal Spirit, that no Mortal Man was able to do the like. Alſo how the ſaid Oats laid in the Fields, and the owner had not Power to fetch them away.

2. A True Narrative of a Young Maid who was poſſeſt with ſeveral Devils or Evil Spirits, one of which, by the Prayers of a Pious and Religious Doctor, who came to viſit her, was fetcht out of her Body, and appear'd in the Room in the likeneſſe of a large Snake, and twiſted it ſelf about the Doctor's Neck, whilſt he was at his Devotion.

With an Account alſo of other Devils which yet remain in her, and reveal ſeveral ſtrange things, the like never heard before; of which, the Contents within, will give you a particular Account.

This Narrative is atteſted by ſeveral Perſons of Credit, but amongſt many others, by one Mrs. *Hopper*, a perſon of worth, and good Reputation, whom you may ſpeak with at the Sign of the *Bell and Draggon*, in *White's Alley*, in *Chancery Lane*, who was there preſent whilſt this accident happened.

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I.—*Strange* NEWS *from* HARTFORD-SHIRE.

MEN may dally with HEAVEN, and criticiſe on HELL, as wittily as they pleaſe, but that there are really ſuch places, the wiſe Diſpenſations of Almighty Providence, does not ceaſe continually to evince. For if by thoſe accumulated circumſtances which generally induces us to the belief of any thing beyond our ſenſes, we may reaſonably gather that there are certainly ſuch things as DEVILS, we muſt neceſſarily conclude that theſe DEVILS have a HELL; and as there is a HELL, there muſt be a HEAVEN, and conſequently a GOD; and ſo all the Duties of Chriſtian Religion as indiſpenſable ſubſequents neceſſarily follow.

The firſt of which Propoſitions this enſuing Narrative does not a little help to confirm. For no longer ago, than within the compaſs of *Auguſt* laſt paſt, there hapned ſo unuſual an Accident in *Hartford-ſhire*, as is ſtill not only the general Diſcourſe, and admiration of the whole country; but may for its rarity challenge any other event, which has for theſe many years bin produc'd in any other County whatſoever. The Story thus:—In the ſaid county, lives a rich induſtrious Farmer, who perceiving a ſmall crop of his (of about three half acres of land which he had ſowed with *Oats*) to be ripe and fit for gathering, ſent to a poor Neighbour whom he knew worked commonly in the ſummer-time at Harveſt Labor, to agree with him about Mowing, or cutting the ſaid Oats down; the poor man as it behoov'd him, endeavoured to ſell the ſweat of his brow and marrow of his bones at as dear a rate as reaſonably he might, and therefore aſkt a good round price for his labour, which the Farmer taking ſome exceptions at, bid him much more under the uſual rate than the poor man aſkt above it; ſo that ſome ſharp words had paſt when the Farmer told him he would diſcourſe with him no more about it. Whereupon the honeſt Mower recollecting with himſelf, that if he undertook not that little ſpot of work, he might thereby loſe much more buſineſs which the Farmer had to employ him in beſide, ran after him, and told him, that, rather than diſpleaſe him, he would do it at what rate in reaſon he pleas'd; and as an inſtance of his willingneſs to ſerve him, propos'd to him a lower price than he had mowed for any time this year before in. The irritated Farmer with a ſtern look, and haſty geſture, told the poor man, *That the Devil himſelf ſhould mow his Oats before he ſhould have any thing to do with them*, and upon this went his way, and left the ſorrowful Yeoman, not a little troubled that he had diſoblig'd one in whoſe Power it lay to do him many kindneſſes.

But however, in the happy ſeries of an interrupted proſperity, we may ſtrut, and plume our ſelves over the miſerable Indigencies of our neceſſitated Neighbours; yet there is a juſt God above, who weighs us not by our Bags, nor meaſures us by our Coffers; but looks upon all

men indifferently, as the common ſons of *Adam*; ſo that he who carefully officiates that rank or ſtation wherein the Almighty has plac't him, tho' but a mean one, is truly more worthy the Eſtimation of all men, than he who is prefer'd to ſuperior dignities, and abuſes them: And what greater abuſe, than the contempt of Men below him: the relief of whoſe common neceſſities is none of the leaſt Conditions whereby he holds all his *Good things*; which when that Tenure is forfeited by his default, he may juſtly expect ſome Judgment to enſue; or elſe that thoſe riches whereby he prizes himſelf ſo extravagantly, may ſhortly be taken from him.

We will not attempt to fathom the cauſe, or reaſon of *Preternatural Events;* but certain we are, as the moſt credible and general relation can inform us, that that ſame night this poor Mower and Farmer parted, his Field of Oats was publickly beheld by ſeveral Paſſengers, to be all on a Flame, and ſo continued for ſome ſpace, to the great conſternation of thoſe that beheld it.

Which ſtrange news being by ſeveral carried to the Farmer next morning, could not but give him a great curioſity to go and ſee what was become of his crop of Oats, which he could not imagin, but was totally devour'd by thoſe ravenous Flames which were obſerv'd to be ſo long reſident on his acre and half of ground.

Certainly a reflection on his ſuddain and indiſcreet expreſſion, [*That the Devil ſhould mow his Oats before the poor Man ſhould have any thing to do with them*] could not but on this occaſion come into his memory. For if we will but allow ourſelves ſo much leiſure, to conſider how many hits of providence go to the production of one Crop of Corn, ſuch as the aptitude of ſoyl, the ſeaſonableneſs of ſhowers, nouriſhing ſolſtices and ſalubreous winds, &c. we ſhould rather welcome maturity with devout acknowledgments than prevent our gathering of it by our prufuſe wiſhes.

But not to keep the curious reader any longer in ſuſpence, the inquiſitive Farmer no ſooner arriv'd at the place where his Oats grew, but to his admiration he found the Crop was cut down ready to his hands; and as if the Devil had a mind to ſhew his dexterity in the art of Huſbandry, and ſcorn'd to mow them after the uſual manner, he cut them in round circles, plac't every ſtraw with that exactneſs that it would have taken up above an age, for any man to perform what he did in that one night: And the man that owed them was afraid to remove them.

2.—*Strange* NEWS *from* KENT.

What Scope and Power the Almighty is pleas'd to allot the *Prince of Darkneſs, and his Evil Spirits*, would be more becoming the buſineſs

of a large volumn, than a little ſheet: ſome Divines have indeed endeavoured to gueſs at it, but none of them ever perfectly deſided it. I ſhall not therefore trouble my Reader with any tedious harangue of ſeveral Mens opinions in this particular, but preſently fall on the ſtrange circumſtances of this wonderful Narrative, the particulars whereof are of ſufficient validity to confirm the moſt ſtaggering and unreſolved Chriſtian, and to convert the moſt impudent and incredulous *Atheist* in the whole World.

The perſon nominated in the Title Page, who atteſts the verity of this Relation, happening to have ſome near Relations who lived very near the place where this occurrence happened, chanced ſome time ſince to give them a viſit, and hearing (as ſoon as ſhe arrived there) a General Wonder, and ſeeing an Univerſal Conſternation appearing almoſt in every ones countenance, at this young maids being poſſeſt with the Devil or Evil Spirits, which for ſome time were heard to talk and ſhriek within her; ſhe had a great curioſity to become an eye-witneſs of what every one reported to be ſo miraculous, partly to ſatisfie her own incredulity, and partly that ſhe might credibly inform others of what ſhe had been ſo often told her ſelf, contriving in this Reſolution, ſhe made farther inquiry after this buſineſs, whereby ſhe underſtood, that thoſe Devils or Evil Spirits which inhabited in this miſerable Creature, like thoſe which poſſeſs'd *Saul*, were not at all times injurious alike, but ſometimes ſuffer'd her a little freedom from their unruly and incompaſſionate Rage.

She was farther informed, that an eminent Doctor, whom ſhe had long known, was the Maids greateſt viſitant; he by the double aſſiſtance of his Devotion and Phyſick, had bin much more effectual than all other means uſed towards the Mittigating or Aſſwaging of her violent Fits, ſo that the Atteſtor hereof, becauſe ſhe would ſee the utmoſt, choſe out ſuch an opportunity to go viſit this poſſeſſed Creature as theſe Fits were come upon her, and her Friend the Doctor was there.

The place where this diſtreſſed Creature lay, was at a Town known by the name of *Arpington*, above three miles diſtant from *Bexly*, a market town in *Kent*, and it was on Munday the fifth day of this inſtant *May* when this atteſtor went to ſee her; when ſhe firſt entred the room, ſhe found the Maid in the very height of one of her dreadful Fits; dreadful I may well call them, ſince thoſe envious Spirits within her, ſtill retain their Deviliſh Natures, had contracted her Nerves, Joints, and Sinews, after ſo wonderful a manner, that they had almoſt drawn her out of human ſhape; ſhe appeared almoſt of a heap with a Face though comely and well favour'd before, yet in this Fit ſo ſqueez'd and drawn out of ſhape that her neareſt Relations, had not they been acquainted with what happened before, could not have known her, her Teeth were ſet, as at the approach of Death, and her ſtrained Eye-ſtring had pulled her Eye-

balls an incredible way into her head; in this dreadful poſture ſhe appear'd when the Atteſter came into the Room, and found her acquaintance Doctor *Boreman* earneſtly at his prayers by her, ſo that all the Spectators remain'd in a great ſilence and expectation of what would be the event of ſo unuſual an accident.

But no curioſity could be large enough to expect what immediately happened, for as this worthy Doctor was in the midſt of his Devotion, notwithſtanding the Maids Teeth were ſo ſet, and her lips as aforeſaid, yet at the very juncture, all the people might hear theſe Infernal Spirits groan as it were in her Belly; and whether it were through the extream fervency of him who prayed, or any other ſupernatural cauſe, Heaven only knows, but at length, one of theſe Spirits or Devils was heard by all the Spectators, and particularly by Mrs. *Hopper*, who then ſtood very near her, in a dreadful Tone to ſpeak theſe words very diſtinctly, *Weaker and weaker, weaker and weaker;* which Exclamation it repeated four times over, and then ſeaſed.

What Horror, what Conſternation and Amazement did this, or rather did it not, work in the wondering Auditors, ſome of them clapt their hands on their hearts, and with elevated Eyes, ſeemed to tell the reſt, that Amazement had made them looſe, or at leaſt forget the uſe of their Tongues, others ſtood as ſtill as if they had been metamorphiſed into ſtatues; others ran out of the Room almoſt ſenſeleſs, and were ſometime before they could declare the reaſon of ſo ſudden a ſurpriſal.

But this Gentlewoman being of an undaunted courage, was reſolved to ſtay and ſee the laſt of what would happen and therefore ſtirred not out of the Room till the Doctor had done, and a little after, both ſhe and all that were left in the Room, might again hear one of the ſame Spirits within her, which had got poſſeſſion of the Maid, to bark like a little Dogg twice together.

This was all that was heard or ſeen worthy of publick remark at this time.

But on another day wherein this poor Creature was ſeiſed on by theſe Lamentable Fits, the ſame perſon was earneſtly at Prayer on his knees by her, when behold a far greater wonder than we have before related, happened in the ſight of a great number of Spectators who then came to ſee her. I know to many it will ſeem incredulous, for I know there are ſome people which will not believe there are any ſuch things as Witches or Spirits, becauſe they then know they muſt in all reaſon be induced to believe there is a God, which by reaſon of a conſtant courſe and habit of Sin, a uſual cuſtom of Flyring and Laughing at the News of a Heaven or a Hell, or an eternal being in the World to come; theſe would not willingly that the ſubſiſtance of a Deity ſhould be found true.

But ſince no Reaſons nor Examples will convince ſuch obſtinate humoriſts, let them perſiſt irrefractory, till ſtartling Death, with its train

of Terrors, open their Blind-eyes, and in ſpite of all their unwillingneſs to the contrary, preſents them with a Landſkip of thoſe infernal Territories; the gloomy habitations of Devils or Damned Souls, where they are likely to remain to all eternity. In the interim, good Chriſtians will believe their eyes and other ſences, and when creditably and unanimouſly related, as this, will credit the atteſtation of others; and therefore I ſhall boldly divulge this as an undoubted truth. That as the aforeſaid Doctor was praying again for this diſtreſſed Creature, a live and ſeeming ſubſtance forc'd its way out of her mouth in likeneſs of a large Serpent, and flew to the Doctor, winding itſelf, in the preſence of the whole auditory about his neck, where it for ſome time remain'd, till ſome of the ſtanders by were going to pluck it off, at which it immediately vaniſhed, and was never ſeen ſince. This I ſay was done before a multitude of people, all of which are ready to confirm it under their hands, to be a viſible truth.

There yet remains another of theſe Spirits in this Maid, which many times diſtorts her in the manner above mentioned, the noys of it is heard as ſhe goes or moves; it will at ſome times anſwer ſeveral queſtions propoſed to it, at other times make a hideous murmuring, as if it diſliked its preſent habitation; which unparalleled wonder, people come far and near to ſee, and all return with the ſame acknowledgment, that they never ſaw nor heard of the like all their Lives.

The Gentlewoman who gives her Atteſtation to the Truth of this Narrative, returned up to LONDON, *but on* MUNDAY *laſt, ſhe ſpoke with both the Maid (when her Fit was mittigated) and the Doctor, under whoſe tuition ſhe ſtill remains, and from charitable endeavours we hope to hear of farther ſucceſs; of which you may have a further Relation, and the unqueſtionable Truth both of that and this, atteſted by Several Subſtantial Witneſſes.*

Advertisements.

STOLEN from Mr. Thomas Nicholl *of* Buſhey *in the County of* Hertford, *a bay Gelding* 6 *years old, about* 15 *hands, a cut tail, his hind legs both swoln with the ſcratches, the hair clipped off, and a little grown again, a brand mark on the near ſhoulder. Whoever gives notice of him to* Mr. Ralph Neale, *a Baker, near the* Bell Inn, *in* Holborn, London, *or to the ſaid* Mr. Nicholl, *ſhall have* 20*s. Reward.*

LOST or Strayed out of the Grounds of Sir Benjamin Titchbourne, *at* Rickmanſworth *near* Moore Park, *in the County of* Hartford, *a dark brown Coach-Mare, a ſtar in her forehead, big-headed, lop-ear'd, farcy knots on one of her hind legs. Whoſoever gives notice of the ſaid Mare to the ſaid* Sir Benjamin Titchbourne, *at* Rickmanſ-

worth, *or to* John Hardwick, *Innkeeper at the* Sword and Buckler, *in* Holborn, *ſhall have* 20*s. Reward.*

STOLEN *or Strayed from* Mr. John Caſon *at* Ilding, *near* Canterbury, *a black Gelding*, 14 *hands high, a bob tail, two white heels behind and no more white about him*, 5 *years old, trots all. A red roan Mare, near* 14 *hands, a white ſtar in her forehead, bob tail'd, her main ſhorn, about* 10 *years old, all her paces. A bay Mare, with a hog rump, carries her noſe out, has had a fleſh hurt upon one of her thighs behind which ſeems to be a bunch, about* 13 *hands*, 8 *years old, and all her paces. Whoever gives notice of them to* Mr. Dorman Newman, *Bookſeller in the* Poultry, London, *or to* Mr. Hobday, *Woollen Draper in* Canterbury, *ſhall have* 3 *pounds reward.*

LOST *from Mr. Head's Grounds at* Leyborn *in* Kent, *a large brown ſtone-horſe, above* 15 *hands, hollow ey'd, having but one eye, eight years old, a flew horſe, and a ſtar very remarkable in his forehead. Whoever gives notice of him to* Mr. John Head, *at* Mr. Daw's *houſe in* Little Tower Street, *ſhall have* 30*s. Reward.*

STRAYED *or ſtolen out of the Grounds of* Thomas Polhill, Eſq., *of* Charleton *near* Greenwich *in* Kent, *a white Gelding, about* 15 *hands high, raw-noſed, tender footed, and having all his paces. Whoever gives notice of the ſaid Gelding to* Thos. Polhill, Eſq., *at the place aforeſaid, or* Mr. Edward Polhill *at the* Dolphin, *near the* Old Swan *in* Thames Street, *ſhall have* 10*s. Reward,*

RID *away with from the* White Hart *in* Rocheſter, *an iron gray Nag, about* 14 *hands high, one wall-eye, thorough paced, a large hogſkin ſaddle, full ſkirted, marked with* A. W. *upon the ſaddle. Whoever can give notice of the ſaid Horſe or Perſon that rid him, to* Mr. Thomas Finch *in* Hary-lane *in* Tower-ſtreet, *or to Mr.* Arthur White, *at the* Angel *in* Graveſend, *or to the* White Hart, *aforeſaid, ſhall be well rewarded.*

STOLEN *from* Mr. John Ditton *at* Woodchurch *in* Kent, *a black Mare, with a bald face, two white feet behind, one white foot before, a bob tail, nigh ſix years old, near* 14 *hands, with a hogſkin ſaddle of a great length. Whoever gives notice of her to the ſaid* Mr. Ditton, *or to* Mr. Grange *near the* Three Blackbirds *in* James-ſtreet, Covent Garden, *ſhall have Forty ſhillings reward.*

STRAYED *or Spirited from* Mr. Simon New's *houſe in* Vere-ſtreet, *next door to the* Bell, *an Indian Woman about* 40 *years of age, tawny complexion, long black hair, a long cut down her forehead, her name* Sarah. *Whoever brings her to* Mr. New *aforeſaid, ſhall be well rewarded.*

FINIS.